

## **American Filmmaker and Writer Sadia Shepard visits Chennai on April 6, 2009**

U.S. Consulate General – Chennai has invited noted American Filmmaker and Writer Ms. Sadia Shepard to visit Chennai On Monday, April 6, 2009. Ms. Shepard's book "The Girl from Foreign" was recently released in India.

Sadia Shepard is a documentary filmmaker and writer based in New York City. In 2001, she left New York for Bombay on a Fulbright Scholarship, her goal to try to understand the history and future of the tiny Indian Jewish community that her grandmother was born into and left to marry her Muslim grandfather. Sadia spent nearly two years recording her experiences in film, video and writing, which became the basis of her first book, "The Girl from Foreign."

Ms. Shepard's 38 minute documentary "In Search of The Bene Israel" is the story of the filmmaker's journey to reconnect with her maternal grandmother's Bene Israel community of Western India. The film follows a group of 3500 Jews in and around Bombay who believe that their ancestors landed in India after being shipwrecked 2000 years ago. The community is in the process of a community-wide migration to Israel. We meet a Jewish Indian filmmaker working in Bollywood, a family who takes care of a rural synagogue and a young couple on the eve of their marriage and departure for Israel.

In addition to writing, Ms. Shepard continues to produce documentaries for television and film. Her credits include the "Outsourcing" episode of Morgan Spurlock's award-winning series "30 DAYS" and RJ Cutler's forthcoming film "The September Issue," about "Vogue" editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, which premieres at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. "In Search of the Bene Israel" will screen at the New York Jewish Film Festival at Lincoln Center in January 2009.

Sadia lectures frequently about growing up in a home with a Muslim mother, Christian father and Jewish grandmother; the history of India's Jewish communities; the Partition of India; and the craft of autobiographical writing. She is currently at work on her second book.

### **Press Events:**

#### **Monday, April 6, 2009**

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Screening of "In search of Bene Israel" Followed by a talk and discussions

Venue: Hall F-50, Centenary Building, Chepauk Campus, University of Madras

07:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Reading from "The Girl from Foreign" organized in collaboration with Madras Book Club and Sheraton Park Hotel

Venue: Arcot Hall, Sheraton Park Hotel and Towers, TTK Road, Chennai - 18